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# Elizabeth Blair Lee

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**Elizabeth Blair Lee** (born June 20, 1818, [Kentucky](#); died September 13, 1906)<sup>[1]</sup> was an [American](#) woman who lived through the [American Civil War](#), and wrote hundreds of letters<sup>[2]</sup> describing the events of the times to her husband, [Samuel Philips Lee](#).

## Biography   [ [edit source](#) ]










She was born in Kentucky to [Francis Preston Blair](#) and Eliza Violet Gist Blair. She was the sister of [Montgomery Blair](#), James Blair, and [Francis Preston Blair, Jr.](#) When the family moved to [Blair House](#) across the street from the [White House](#), the President, Vice-President and Cabinet members were frequent guests. Elizabeth's best friend was President [Andrew Jackson](#)'s young niece, [Emily Donelson](#),<sup>[*citation needed*]</sup> who served as [First Lady](#) for her uncle, whose wife had died. Elizabeth lived in the White House one winter because of her health problems from dampness at Blair House. According to one version of the story,<sup>[3]</sup> Elizabeth was present with her father when they chanced upon the silver-flecked spring which would inspire the name of the family's summer home in what would eventually become [Silver Spring, Maryland](#). The spring site is memorialized at Silver Spring's [Acorn Park](#) though the water source was disrupted in the 1950s.

She married Rear Admiral [Samuel Phillips Lee](#), a [U.S. Navy](#) officer during the Civil War. Her letters to her husband, who was away for long periods as commander of the *[USS Philadelphia](#)*, describe wartime life in her homes of [Washington, D.C.](#) and [Silver Spring, Maryland](#), during the war. Elizabeth was the mother of [Blair Lee](#), a U.S. senator from Maryland.

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